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Sincere Convert.
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CERTAIN
SELECT CASES
RESOLVED.

Specially, tending to the right
ordering of the heart, that
we may comfortably walk
with God in our general
and particular Callings.

By THOMAS SHEPHARD,
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England.*

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and Fountain in *Pauls Church-yard*, near
the little North-door. 1650.



To
THE CHRISTIAN
READER.



*His holy Letter of that ready Scribe
of Christs Kingdom, is so full of Grace
and Truth, that it needs no other E-
pistle commendatory then it self.*

Mr. Shep-
herd of
New-Eng-
land.

*Yet seeing the Lot is unexpectedly fallen upon
my pen, to give it a Superscription that it may
passe current from hand to hand; I do heartily
in the first place, dedicate it to thee; thou blec-
ding, troubled-spirit, as a choise cordiall friend,
an Interpreter, one of a thousand, that doth not
onely speak thy heart, but by the Comforter (whom
Christ hath promised to send) to thy heart.*

*It may be this paper present is sent on Embas-
sie from Heaven, on purpose, to set thy house in
order, to untie thy bosome knots, to bind the strong
man, and cast him out of thy doores, that thy
heart may be once againe set at liberty, to serve
the Lord thy God in thy generall and particular*

To the Christian

Calling, whose service is thy freedom. What is here sent by this Ambassador of Christ, (who is now the voice of one crying in the wilderness) to a wearie and heavy laden soule in this Island. I had rather it should appeare to thy judgement in the serious reading, and to thy conscience in the home application thereof, than from my opinion of it: Therefore I shall onely adde (as the Contents of this letter) certain select Cases, proposed and resolved in the severall paragraphs thereof, as they lie in order in the pages following, viz.

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Page 42.

A sound confutation of that Hereticall Arminian Tenet, viz. That the strength of Grace is to be got rather by Argumentation, then inward Communication and influence, arising from union with Christ.

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The experiences of this tried servant of Christ, (who is the Pen-man hereof) how he was cured of Atheisticall thoughts : whether they did wear out, or whether by the dint of Arguments they were rationally overthrown.

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Lastly, whether those changes, which a child of God hath sometimes, and those movings of the spirit are caused by a naturall temper, or Gods Spirit.

All which select Cases, (and many more, that collaterally issue from their sides) are judiciously resolved with much perspicuity and brevity in these few sheets; by the only judge of all Controversies, the two edged sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

Thns

To the Christian

Thus humbly beseeching thee, to read over this Epistle of Christ to thee, with the same Spirit of love, and of a sound mind, which indited every line in it.

I doe desire to leave thee at the Throne of Grace, in the armes of Christ, with the Father of all Comforts; that thou maiest receive the Peace of God which passeth all understanding; and be crowned with joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.

I subscribe my selfe

Friend,

Thine in any Spirituall
furtherance of thy Faith,

William Adderley.

Dated from Chanceryhouse in
London, Febr. 1. 1647.



Deare Sir,



Dare not multiply many words in acknowledging and professing my own unfitness and insufficiency to yeeld your loving and most welcom Letter, that satisfaction which both your Self desire, and it deserves : Neither yet will I be so unfaithfull to you (seeing your expectation puts me to reply) neither ought I (I think) be so unserviceable to Jesus Christ, who in you, and by you, beckens to me to take this call to write to you, and not to neglect so fair a season, seeing especially it may be possible my dying Letter to you, before I depart from hence, and returne to him, as not knowing but our last disasters and Sea-straits (of which I wrote to you) may be but preparations for the execution of this next approaching voyage. Yet our cries are to the hills, and our desires are your prayers ; and at this time my endeavour shall

B

be

be in respect of your self, to break open that light to you, and to prepare it to you, with that brevity I may, and with what plainnesse I am able; beseeching the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who must be when all failes, the wonderfull Counsellor, to give you the spirit of revelation, and that after you have suffered a while by these outward temptations, doubts, fears, desertions, distractions, which the Letter mentions, hee would make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you. And this I verily think will be the unexpected, yet happy, joyfull, and most glorious end of them; For since I have observed and seen the lamentable ruines of the soule, and seeming graces of many men, by being rockt a sleep in a quiet, still, calme, easie performance of duties; without such awaking temptations and tumults within, which it self complains of: I say since I have observed what a deale of mud is in the bottom of such standing Pools, and what a deale of filth is in such Moats, which are inwardly at ease, and not emptied from vessell to vessell, next unto the donation of the Lord Jesus to a man, I have accounted such tumultuous heart-storms and uproars, together with the fruitfull strange effects of them, the second mercy. For I never saw that man kept from secret putrefaction and corruption, that was not usually salted with such temptations (especially in a Christians first Apprentiship) which usually preserve him entire till death. And therefore (Dear Sir) faint not, for Jesus Christ will

will raise a world of blessings out of your present Chaos and confusions. But I make halt to answer. Before your reply to my first Letter; your complaints are many.

Your first trouble is, concerning your disturbances in civill affairs, by the secret injection of Religious thoughts; so that you know not how to follow the one, without hazard of grieving the spirit, and breaking your peace, in not maintaining and nourishing the same time the other: and hence being drawn to go two waies at the same time (which you cannot well do) your heart is disquieted, and your peace much interrupted.

This of yours, puts me in mind of the complaint of an honest, yet plain man, to an able Minister once, who in bewailing his condition to him, among other miseries, that was not the least: (*viz.*) that he was exceedingly troubled with good thoughts, so that he could not follow his place, unlesse very oft he did stand still and pray, for fear of grieving the Spirit, (as he thought) and losing his season of being heard in Heaven: (for said Conscience oft unto him) how dost thou know but this may be thy accepted time, and if thou dost not take it, it may be thou shalt never have it again? I have forgot the Ministers answer, but I am sure in these complaints you go not alone: I have lately known one very able, wise, and godly, put upon the Rack in these kind of thoughts by him, that envying Gods peoples peace, knowes how to change himselfe into an

Angell of light. For it being his usuall course in the time of his health, to make a diary of his hourelly life, and finding much benefit by it, hee was in Conscience prest by the power and delusion of Satan, to make and take the same daily survey of his life in the time of his sicknesse, by meanes of which, he spent his enfeebled spirits, cast on fuell to fire his sicknesse, and had not a friend of his convinced him of his erroneous Conscience, misleading him at that time, he had murdered his body, out of conscience to save his soule, and to preserve his grace, and do you think these were the motions of Gods spirit, which like those Locusts? *Rev. 9. 9, 10.* had faces like men, but had tailes like Scorpions, and stings in their tailes.

Your thoughts I know, are not likely to produce the same effects; although you have the same efficient: and because you say your peace is hereby disturbed by ignorance, as not knowing what to doe in the midst of these Civill actions and these religious thoughts, I conceive that two things are to be sadly considered of, for the cure of them.

First how to know when such religious pious thoughts come from Gods spirit, and when from the devill transforming himself into an Angell of light, or from a well-melted stirring conscience, yet blind. For when you know they come from Gods spirit, you are bound to nourish them; but when not, you are bound not to embrace nor comply with them. Secondly, learn how your soul is to behave and carry it selfe

Two things
to be considered
about motions.

selfe in Civill employments : For when you see how you doe, and may honour God in following them, your spirit will not be so unquiet, if at any time you imbrace not the suggestions of the other.

1. For the first briefly, all good motions and thoughts are not the spirits motions, as may thus appear.

There be three things chiefly by which wee may discern the motions, suggestions, and thoughts which come from Gods spirit : all which concurring together in a good action, or thought, or word, (not one alone) will make discovery whether they are from Gods spirit or not.

1. If it be suggested for Gods ends, its from Gods spirit, to act so high as for a supernaturall end, must arise from a supernaturall principle, which only is Gods spirit, Pharasaicall actions were for a double selfish end, and hence, not from Gods spirit, but nature, and their own spirit. 1. To be seen of men. 2. If they did any of them abhor this, yet it was to purchase and gender in their own minds an opinion of holinesse before God, and hence Christ gives them this Item, in giving Almes, that they should not let the right hand know what their left hand doth : for many men will doe good acts, lest they should by the neglect of them, thinke them hypocrites, and so be troubled for them : Christ would have us not to take notice of what we do for such an end.

If they be animated and quickned from Gods

How to try
the moti-
ons of
Gods Spi-
rit.

1.

command, for the higher measure of holinesse for glorious ends, without a warrant from the Word, is the more sordid superstition: Christ healed the Leper, when he charged him with anger to tell no man, he, (no question for a good end) published the miracle the more; this was a good motion, but it was sinnefull in him, being crosse to Christs command: when Christ would have washed *Peters* feet, he had many thoughts that came into his head, concerning his owne vilenesse, and Christs glory; and had a good end and meaning in his answers; yet his humility crossing Christs command, the Lord professeth against it, and him for it, that he had no part in him, if hee should goe on in it.

3.

Gods Spirit sets a man on worke in due season; for let the duty be commanded and rightly directed, yet if it be not done in season, it is not from Gods Spirit: hence *Plal. 1. The righteous bring forth fruit in its season*: and hence *Solomon* speakes of words spoken in season, are as apples of Gold: and hence we read in *Ecclesiastes* of a time, and season for every thing under the Sunne: and therefore when there is a season of Gods appointing for civill things or businessse, it is not season now to be molested or perplexed in it, by the injection and evocation of those thoughts which we thinke to proceed from the Spirit of God: I know indeed, that the Spirit of God doth enable a man to do whatever good he doth; but as Grace makes Nature sometimes to serve, so sinnefull Nature brings

brings Grace into captivity, (which *Paul* complains of, Rom. 7.) and makes Grace to serve it. To exhort and reprove another for sinne, is from Gods Spirit that it is done, but to reprove at an unseasonable time, its from sinnefull corruption, abusing Gods grace, and making *Sampson* to grinde. Its from the excellency of a knife to cut well, but to cut my finger with it when I should be cutting of my meat with it, ariseth not from the end of the knife, nor from the intention of him that made it : so to thinke of good things, it is from the spirit, I grant, but to think of them in such a season that God sets you a worke to minde and follow other occasions, its from the enemy of Gods spirit, and your owne peace ; for as it is a sinne to nourish worldly thoughts when God sets you a worke in spirituall heavenly employments, so it is (in some respects) as great a sin to suffer your self to be distracted by spirituall thoughts, when God sets you on worke in Civill (yet lawfull) employments : such thoughts (I conceive) are but the leaven of Monkish holinesse, if they divert you from your lawfull affaires, when the Lord calls you to follow them. For the Lord never calls you to two divers employments at the same time, unlesse you make the one to be a meanes to further the good of the other ; which such piousthoughts in some civill employments doe, it being no peece of Christian wisdom or honesty to turne round in worldly employments so long till by giddinesse wee fall down, but by secret steps ever and anon to look up to heaven

and to behold the face of God, to whom onely therein wee are to approve our selves. But yet it seemes your thoughts are so far from being subservient the one to the other, that you are distracted and molested, and your peace interrupted, and your Christian course made troublesome, and an heavy burthen, which surely can not be by the yoke of Jesus Christ, therefore you must first bring your troubles in this particular to this issue, either you may follow your Civill affaires, and nourish these thoughts as helps to maintaine your peace and make you heavenly minded in them, (and if they serve sufficiently to such an end, why are you troubled with them?) or els you cannot follow God comfortably in civill actions, unlesse you banish from you thoughts which doe so miserably distract you, and then why doe you fear you shall grieve Gods Spirit, if at the same time you do not give entertainment to them, the unseasonablenesse of which, speaks plainly they came not from the spirits suggestions, besides their hinderance of comfortably walking with God, which the imployments themselves can never hinder.

But you will say, when is the season of nourishing such thoughts.

I answer, Entertaine those thoughts as (it may be) you have done some friends, who came to you at that time you have businesse with strangers, (whom you love not so well as your friends,) you have desired them to stay a while, untill you have done with the other, and then you have returned to your friend, and when
the

the other hath been shut out of the doores, the other hath had the welcom, and hath lodged with you all night; and thus you have grieved neither, but pleased both. It is so in this case, Worldly employments are our strangers, yet they must be spoke with, Religious thoughts and practises are our friends, these come unto us while God calls us to parley with the other, you cannot speake with both at one time, in one place, without much perplexity: take therefore this course, make much of the good thoughts, but parley not with them till your businesse is done with strangers; and towards evening, which is your season, set some time apart every day for meditation, and then make them welcome; then consider and ponder well what was suggested to you in the day time, and sift every good thought to the bran, for then is your season, and after that let them sup and lodge with you all night, and keep the house with you every day. And surely, when the Lord Jesus shall see what a friend you shall make of his Spirit, and how wisely you walke therein, you shall not need to feare any grieving of it, or unseasonable times: nay (I say) you will most fearefully grieve his Spirit, if you parley with the conceived suggestions of it at unseasonable times. *What thou doest, doe it with all thine heart, saith Solomon, Eccle. 9.*

Therefore when you are to pray, confer, or meditate, do it with all your minde, and all your thoughts, and all your strength. So when
God

God calls you to worldly employments, do them with all your mind and might, and when the season of meditation comes, take it, which glorious ordinance of God, although many Christians use it occasionally, and against some good time, or when they have leisure meeting with them, yet to set some time apart for it in a solemn manner every day, and that in conscience as wee doe for prayer generally, where is the man to be found that does thus? Those men that thus neglect their season of musing and entring into parley with Gods Spirit dayly, may be well said to grieve the Spirit, *through the neglect of which ordinance, Gods Spirit is as much grieved by Professors in England, as by any course I know.* The Lord awaken us: but I have run too farre already in this first part of my answer.

2 Meanes.

For the second meanes viz. how the soule is to carry it selfe in Civill employments, that so you may not thinke you do for better, when you listen to good thoughts as you mention,

1.

I say but two things, 1. Learne to follow them out of an awfull respect to the eye, presence, and command of Jesus Christ; and to doe what you do in Civill busineses, as the worke of Christ; When you are riding, or making up breaches between man and man, then thinke I am now about the worke of Jesus Christ.

2.

Secondly, seeing your selfe thus working in worldly employments for him, you may easily

sily apprehend that for that time God calls you to them, and you attend upon the worke of Jesus Christ in them, that you honour God as much, nay more by the meanest servile worldly act, then if you should have spent all that time in meditation, prayer, or any other spiritual employment, to which you had no call at that time : It is noted therefore by some, of *Peters* wifes mother, that when Christ had healed her of her Fever, she sate not downe at table with Christ in communion with him, which (no question) was sweet, but ministred at the Table, and ran too and fro, and so served him, and acted for him, wherein she shewed more love, and gave him more honour, *viz.* in that meane service, and in acting for him, then in having communion with him : now if the Lord would out of his abundant goodnesse, set the soule in such an acting frame for him, and if it could do its worldly employments, as the worke of Christ, and see how greatly it honors Christ in attending on him, Oh what peace should a Christian enjoy, notwithstanding all his distractions every day ! And how easily would such devout thoughts you speak of, be repell'd like darknesse before the light, for the noblenesse of those good thoughts you speak of presenting themselves against the mean and base outsidēs of Civil affaires, makes you ready to honour the one, when you are call'd to serve the other : but now, by seeing, you do the work of Christ Jesus in them, you shall hereby see a glory in the meanest service you performe in

in Civill affaires, and this will make you cleave unto them. But I have said too much about repelling of good thoughts in these times, wherein men have so few, though (it may be) little enough to satisfie you.

Quest. 2.

Your second trouble is this (*viz*) that your heart is kept from being humbled for sinnefull distractions, that hinder and interrupt the spirituall performance of holy duties, and that for two reasons : First, Because they be involuntary and accidentall. Secondly, Because they cannot breake the Covenant between God and your soule, being but infirmities.

Ans.

For the latter clause concerning breach of Covenant, together with the other. 1. I say, not onely infirmities do not, but the greatest sinnes cannot make a breach of Covenant between God and the soul that is once really (not rationally) wrapt up in the Covenant of grace. Indeed grosse scandalous sinnes, nay infirmities, when they are given way to, and not resisted, may keepe the soule from the fruition for a time of Gods Covenant, but never from the eternal joy and right unto it; for as the habit of Faith or Grace gives a man a constant right to the promise and Covenant (which seed ever remaines, which habit ever lasts, *Jer. 3.9.*) so the act of Faith or Grace gives a man fruition of the Covenant and the benefit of the promise, and hence by the asking and venting of some sinnes wherein there is included the neglect of the exercise of grace, He that is really in covenant with God, may be deprived of the fruition

ition of it; yet seeing the seed of God, and the habit of grace ever remaines, he cannot by any sin break his covenant, for the covenant of grace is absolute, wherein the Lord doth not onely promise the good, but to begin and perfect and fulfill the condition absolutely, without respect of sin, *ex parte creaturae*: Indeed if Gods covenant of Grace did (as that of works) depend upon man to fulfill the condition, having sufficient grace to fulfill it, then grosse sin might well breake the Covenant: but seeing God hath undertaken to fulfill the Covenant absolutely, notwithstanding all the evils and sins of the soul, no sinne can possibly break that knot and covenant which so firme and resolute love hath once knit. And therefore, if this be a good argument, Infirmities cannot break covenant: What cause have I to be humbled for them? so as to say, It is thy mercy Lord that I am not consumed for them (as you write) you may upon the same ground say so, If the Lord should desert you, or you forsake the Lord, and so fall into the foulest sinne, which I suppose corrupt conscience dares not be so bold as to think or allow of.

Secondly, I say the least sinnes or infirmities do break the first covenant of workes: and hence you do not onely deserve, but are under the sentence of death, and curse of God, immediately after the least hairs-breadth, swarving from the Law by the smallest sinne, and most involuntary accidentall infirmity. According to the Tenor of the Law, the soul that fin-

finneth shall die : and *curfed is he that continueth not in all things of the Law.* Gal. 3. 10. The least sinne being, (*ex parte objecti*) in respect of God against whom it is committed, as horrible and as great as the greatest. For it being an infinite wrong being the dishonour of an infinite Majesty, there can be no greater wrong then an infinite one, unlesse you can imagine a thing greater then that which is infinite ; and therefore in this respect, there is as much venome and mischief done against God in the least, as in the greatest sinne : And therefore it, and whosoever commits it, deserves death for it, as if they had committed the foulest sinne in the world : and therefore after the least and smallest infirmities, you may from hence see what cause you have freely to be humbled, and to confesse for them how worthy you are to be destroyed ; yea, even to look upon your self as lying under the sentence of the Law and death, immediately after the commission of them, and so to mourne bitterly for them.

Object.

But you will say, a Christian that is under the Covenant of grace, is not within the Covenant of workes, that Bond is cancelled, the last will must stand : and therefore he being out of that Covenant, no sinnes of his can be said to breake the Covenant, for no man can be said to breake that Law under which he is not, and which he is not bound to keep.

Answ.

I answer, Every beleever hath a double being or standing, and so there may be put upon him a double respect.

First,

First, he may be considered as united to, and having a spirituall being on Christ; and so it is true, he is under grace, and the Covenant of Grace, and not under the Law, nor the Covenant of workes; and hence not being under the Law, nor bound to keep it as a covenant of life (though it be a rule of life) no sinne can condemn him, there being no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. *Rom. 8. 1.* But as Christ is above condemnation, and law, and death, and curse, so is he. And this truly understood, is the foundation of a Christians joy and peace, and glory every day; yet so, as though sinne doth not condemne him, yet he hath good reason to say, it is mercy, and meer mercy, Lord, that I am not consumed, that I am condemned. For sinne is the same; nay grace and Gods love aggravates sinne; for to sinne against the law deserves death without recovery, but to sinne when grace hath received me, and loved me; when the blood of Christ hath bin shed abundantly to deliver me from sin; Oh this makes the most secret silent sinne a crying one! So that if you do consider this well, you may see what little cause there is to have your heart rising against the deepest humiliation for the least sinne, though you be in Christ, and under grace: For as *Daniel* when he was put into the Lions den, had not he cause to wonder that he was not torne in pieces by them? and why? because it was not from any defect on their parts to teare him in pieces, but from the omnipotent power, and mercy, and

1.

Daniel 3
79

and grace of his God, that muzzell'd their mouths; so though no Lion can teare, though no sinnes can hurt or condemn a Christian, as hee is considered in Christ; yet, hath not he cause to confesse and wonder, and say, Lord, it is thy meer grace and mercy that it is not so? (which is the act of humiliation your letter saith you can hardly come unto) and why? not because Gods grace puts any lesse evill in sinne, but because it is meerely grace that keeps it from spitting that venom which otherwise it would.

Secondly, A Christian may be considered in respect of his naturall being in himselfe, and thus he is ever under the Law, and as oft as hee sinneth, under the sentence of death (and as the Apostle speakes) by nature even we (justified, quickned) are the children of wrath as well as others. And thus after the least involuntary accidentall sinne, you may easily see what cause you have to lie down deeply humbled, mourning under the sentence of death, and Gods eternall curse, as a condemned man going to the execution, to feel that fire that shall never go out; looking upon your self as you are in your self, a forlorn castaway every moment: and this truly understood is the foundation of a Christians sorrow, shame, and confusion of face, self-loathing, self-forgetting, self-forsaking, and condemning every day: and (believe it Sir) it is no small piece of a Christians skill and work, to put a difference between himselfe and himself, himselfe as he is in Christ, and so to joy and triumph, and himselfe as hee is

is growing on his first root, and so to sorrow, and loath, and condemn himself : so that (to winde up all that I have said) looke upon your selfe as in Christ, you may say these involuntary infirmities do not, shall not, condemne me.

But Lord it is grace, Grace that it is not so, and this is Evangelicall humiliation. Look again upon your self, as you stand on your own bottom, and live in your owne nature, and so you may say after the least infirmity ; I have now broken a most holy and righteous Law, and therefore I am already condemned : O woe is me, I have already undone my selfe by mine iniquity : and this is Legall humiliation, which serves for mortification, as the first for vification. I know it is very difficult to bring the heart to acknowledge freely it deserves death after so small an involuntary offence : but when the Lord reveales two things, First, himself in his glory, Secondly, how the least sinne strikes him : I perswade my selfe the vilest heart cannot but be forced to confesse how just God should be in his severest proceedings against him. And withall consider, the more involuntary any sinne is, the more strong and naturall it is, and the more naturall, the more horrible, as to be a naturall Thief is farre worse then to be a deliberat thiefe, who sometimes steales ; and therefore (good Sir) take heed of looking no deeper, nor seeing no further then the bare act, and unvoluntarinesse and accidentalnesse, and suddenesse of your infirmities : for if you do, you looke through the wrong end

of the glasse, and they will appear so small, that you will find it a very tough work to bring your heart consentively to say (if I may say and use your owne phrase) It is thy mercy Lord that I am not consumed for them : but look upon them as indeed they are, in respect of that infinite glory, you strike doing the greatest mischiefs to God by them, and (which makes them the viler) as they are so strong, you cannot remove them ; and so horrible, as that it is naturall to you to commit them, &c. And surely you will not (through grace) finde such thoughts haunt you long; not but that they will be (haply) rising and tempting, but never allway vexing and prevailing. Satans ground reaching as far as the minds of Gods people, and therefore so farre he may come, and there he may walke, (for he came into the minde of innocent *Adam*, nay *Jesus Christ*, by his suggesting temptations) but the heart is Christs peculiar possession and purchase ; and if he shall still there offer to come in and vex you, and prevail against you, and to lodge his suggestions this or any other way with you, you have Law and Christ on your side, by this little light now given you, to cast him out.

Answ.

Quest. 3.

The third thing that troubles you, is the dis-ranking of the Persons in the Trinity, for though you thinke the holy Ghost is God, yet you have not so high a repate of him, as of the Father and the Sonne, because the Sonne ad-dresseth himselfe to God the Father in all his prayers and acknowledgements, in a more im-mediate

mediate manner then unto the holy Ghost, and therefore you would know if the word Father (as in the Lords Prayer,) includes not the Unity in Trinity.

To this briefly consider three things.

Ans.

1. Without all question, the same God which lies under that relative property of Father, is the same God with the God-head of the Sonne, and the God-head of the holy Ghost, there being not three Gods; and therefore the God-head of the Sonne and Spirit, are not excluded, but included in the Godhead of the Father, when we looke upon the Father as God; in the Lords Prayer, or any where else.

2. But secondly, the Father as Father, is never taken for the same holy Ghost in Scripture, nor the Sonne as Sonne, is taken for the Father, nor the holy Ghost as holy Ghost, is at any time taken for the Sonne: For it is a rule in Theologie, though the *res substrata* the thing that lies under the Relative property (*viz.* the God-head) of every person, be common and communicated, yet the same God-head considered as clothed with his Relative property (as Father, Son and Spirit) it is not common, but peculiar. For the God-head of the Father as Father, is not the God-head of the Son as Son, &c.

3. Hence it followes that when Christ addresseth himselfe to the Father as Father in Scripture, it is not because he is either a diverse or greater God then the holy Ghost, but it is for two other reasons.

1. Because the Father as Father, received primarily the wrong that sinne did against his worke of creation. For the Father being the first Person in order, and creation, the first transient act (as election and reprobation were the first immanent) hence this worke is attributed chiefly to God the Father, in respect of our orderly apprehension; and hence man sinning then when he was onely made, this is chiefly attributed to be against the Father, because his worke appeared to be chiefly there, and not against the Son, for his worke chiefly appears in redemption, hee being the second Person, and this the second main and wonderfull work, neither against the holy Ghost, for his worke chiefly appears to us in application, being the third Person, And this the third main act that ever God will do, or show forth to the world in this life: hence God the Father receiving to our apprehension, the wrong in creation by sinne, he is the Person that is to be satisfied and not the holy Ghost. And hence Jesus Christ in all his prayers hath a most speciall eye to him, and not to the Holy Ghost (as holy Ghost) because he came into the world by his death, and intercession, and strong cries, to satisfie God the Father, and not God the holy Ghost as a third Person. And hence it is said, 1 John. 2. 1. 2. *If any man sinne, we have an Advocate with God the Father, (not God the holy Ghost) because he was (to our apprehension) the Person wronged: and hence we are after sins committed chiefly to eye the Father in our prayers,*

ers, and to go to him for pardon with our advocate with us, because to whom offence is chiefly offered, from him chiefly pardon and reconciliation is to be expected.

2. Therefore Christ addresseth himselfe chiefly in his prayers to God the Father, because hee is the originall and first cause of all good, because he is the first Person in order of subsisting, and therefore first too in the manner of conveying. I know the God-head is the originall of all good : but consider the Persons one with another, and so the father is ever the first in operation, as the holy Ghost is the last in consummation, for all good comes from the Father, *James 1. 17.* through the Sonne by the holy Ghost. And hence in all our prayers we are to looke for all good from the Father, for his Sonnes sake to be conveyed us by the holy Ghost : and hence it is said, *John 6. 10.* *No man comes to me but whom the Father draws:* Why? It is the immediate office and worke of the holy Ghost to draw and apply the soul unto Christ, why then is it said, *Unlesse the Father draw?* The reason is, because that which was perfected and consummated by the holy Ghost, was intentionally and by way of purpose and decree begun originally by the Father: and this is that which Christs words have chiefly reference unto (*viz.*) the Father through the Son by the holy Ghost draws.

But I have waded too far in this Divinity, the cleer knowledge of which is reserved for us in heaven : But thus much to satisfie you, yet the

the word Father in the Lords Prayer, I conceive under correction, as it doth not exclude any person of the God-head, so its chiefly set downe there, not so much to denote the Person of the Father, as the affection of God as a Father to us his Sons by Christ, which we are to believe in our first approaching to our prayers, to be as, nay to transcend the affection of any father to his Son : when we com to call upon him for those six things which the Petitions set down, for those three ends, kingdom, power, and glory, which the Prayer concludes withall.

Quest. 4.

Your fourth trouble is your aptnesse to go to God immediately, especially when his graces are most striving in his ordinances, contrary to that of Christ, *Yee believe in God, believe also in me.*

Ans.

So indeed it is usuall for religious nature often to out-run and get the start of grace ; as it appears in many other, so in this case you put ; looke as it is with every man when God awakens him effectually, he first seeks to his kitchin physick to save himselfe, by his duties, praying, mourning, reforming, endeavouring, repenting, working, before he will seeke out to the Physician, and to Christ to save him. Because it was naturall to *Adam* to seeke to live by his working, it is naturall to every Son and branch of that root, to seeke to save himselfe by doing as well as hee can, or as God gives him the strength and grace. So it is here. It was naturall to *Adam* to depend upon, and go to God

God immediately, as a creature to a Creator, as a Sonne to go nakedly to God as a Father: Christ was not then known, nor seen: so it is naturall to every man, when rectified Nature is stirred up, to go immediately to God. It is grace in the second Covenant that reveales and drawes to Jesus Christ, and to God by Christ, *Heb. 7. 25.*

For cure of this distemper, ponder but these three things.

1. Cleerely convince the soule that the immortal, invisible, and most holy God, that dwelleth in an un-approachable light, hath set out himselfe to be seen, or made himselfe onely visible in Jesus Christ, so that he would have no man looke upon him any other waies, then as he hath revealed himselfe in his Son: In whom (though in all other creatures his *vestigia* and footsteeps are to be seen) as he is God, the face of God is to be seen, which no creature is able to behold, but there, being the brightness of his glory, and the expresse Image of his Person, *Heb. 1. 3.* And as hee is man, the very heart of God, both in respect of affection, and will to be seen; So that in and through Jesus Christ, especially his humane nature, the glory of the great God breakes out like the Sun through the clouds most brightly, in respect of us, and therefore in and through his humane nature we are onely to behold God, in whom all that a Christian desires to know, is to bee seen, which is the face and heart of so deare a friend. *2 Cor. 4. 6. Job. 14. 9, 10.* For

we know by too lamentable experience, how the whole world vanishing in their smoky thoughts of the glory of God, as he is considered in himselfe, and not able to conceive or retain the knowledge of him, did hence invent and set up Images as fit objects for their drunken staggering understanding to fasten upon, and to be limited with, and hence adored God before these, (as our Popish Hypocrites doe before the Altar) and in these, and at these, as Papists doe in respect of their Images. Hence the Lord to cure this inveterate naturall malady, hath in the second Person, united himselfe to man Christ Jesus, through whom we are both able to our everlasting wonderment to see him, and also here bound onely to behold him, who as he is a fit handle for our faith, so he is a fit object for our weak mindes to behold the glory of the most high God in. Wherefore then do you offer to go unto God without Christ, when as you are not so much as to looke upon God, but as he appeares in Christ. Is not the humane nature of the Lord Jesus more easie to be seen and conceived of, then the invisible unlimited eternall God-head?

2. Secondly, See evidently that there is not any dram or drop of God you have, especially in Gods ordinances, but it issues from the blood, and is purchased by the intercession, and delivered unto you by the hand of Jesus Christ. *Ephes. 1. 7. H. br. 7. 25. John 5. 22.* You should never have heard the sound of the gospel, nor never have had day of Patience, nor never have

how have heard of Gods Ordinances to finde him in, nor never have been comforted, quickned, enlarged, affected by God Ordinances, were it not for Jesus Christ, the efficacy of whose blood, and power of whose glorious intercession, doth at the very instant you feele any good in Gods Ordinances, prevaile with God the Father for what you feel; for the Father loveth the Sonne, and *hath put all things into his hands, John. 4. 35.* that all men might honour the Son; all the three Persons plotting chiefly for the honour of the second; so that you may see, nay you are bound to believe, at the time you feele your heart savingly affected in any ordinance now, the Lord Jesus who is at the right hand of God in heaven, who is now in his glory, now he remembring me a poote worme on earth, now I feele the fruite of his death. O what a miserable forlorn wretch had I been, were it not for Jesus Christ? Mercy could never have helped, enlightned, comforted, quickned, assured, enlarged me, and Justice could never have relieved my dead, bloudy, perishing lost Soul, had it not been for Jesus Christ, whose Spirit, power, grace, comfort, presence, sweetnesse, I taste, drink, and am satisfied abundantly with, and now doe enjoy.

Oh Sir, me thinks the sad meditation of this, should make you in all Gods ordinances, where you are apt to say you go immediately to God, to hasten suddenly in your thoughts, affections, praises, to Jesus Christ. Nay, me thinks you should

should speedily have your heart elevated and lifted up to Jesus Christ, and say, I receive this, and taste this from Jesus Christ. Oh, but this is but a taste of the hony-comb with the end of my rod, and if this presence of Christs Spirit I feel now be so sweet, what is himselfe then?

3. Thirdly, Labour for increase of love and familiarity with Jesus Christ, by taking notice of him, by comming often to him, by musing daily on his love, as on a fresh thing, by banishing slavish false feares of his forgetfulnesse of you, and want of everlasting love towards you: and then you know love will carry you speedily to him: *amor meus pondus meum*, nay, grant that you have been a stranger to Christ, yet restore the love of Christ to life againe in your Soul, and when you come to his ordinances where he dwells, your Soul will make its first enquiry for him, neither will it be satisfied till it hath seen him, as we do them wee love, towards whom wee have been greatest strangers.

Quest. 5.

Your fifth trouble is, you know not how to apply absolute promises to your selfe, as in *Heb.* 8. because they are made indefinitely without condition. Conditional promises you say you can, if you can find the qualification that gives you right to the good of the promise within you.

Ans.

This usefull fruitfull question, how to apply absolute promises to ones particular, deserves a larger time and answer, then now in the midst

of

of perplexities, I am able, yet willing, to give. For when the Lord saith absolutely without condition, that hee will take away the stony heart, and he will put his feare into his peoples hearts, &c. and these kind of promises are made to some, not to all, to those only whom the Lord will, and in generall to his people. Hereupon the Soules of many Christians, especially such as question Gods love towards them, are most in suspence : and therefore when they complaine of the vilenesse of their hearts and strength of their lusts, let any man tell them that the Lord hath undertaken in the Second Covenant, to heal their backslidings, and to subdue their iniquities, they will hereupon reply, it is true, hee hath promised indeed to do thus for some absolutely, though they have no good in them, but I that feele so vile a heart, so rebellious a nature, will he' do this for me, or no? and thus the Soule floats above water, yet feares it shall sink at last, notwithstanding all that God hath said. I will answer therefore briefly these two things in generall.

1. I shall shew you to what end, and for what use and purpose God hath made absolute promises, not onely to them that be for the present his people, but to them that in respect of their estates and condition are not.

2. I shall shew you how every Christian is to make use of them, and how and when hee ought to apply them. For the first of these.

1. First, I conceive that as in respect of God himselfe, there are many ends which I shall

shall not mention, as being needlesse, so in respect of man, there are principally these two ends for which the Lord hath made absolute promises.

1. To raise up the Soul of a helpelesse sinfull cursed lost sinner in his owne eyes, to some hope (at least) of mercy and help from the Lord. For thus usually every mans Soul is wrought, to whom the Lord doth intend grace and mercy: he first turnes his eyes inward, and makes him to see he is stark naught, and that he hath not one dram of grace in him, who thought himself rich, and wanting nothing before, and consequently, that hee is under the curse and wrath of God for the present, and that if the Lord should but stop his breath, and cover his face, and take him away, which he may easily do, and is to be feared he will, that he is undone for ever. Hereupon the Soul is awakened and falls to his kitchin physick, as I spake before, prayes, and hears, and amends, and strives to grow better, and to stop up every hole, and to amend it selfe of every sinne; but finding it selfe to grow worse and worse, and perceiving thereby that he doth but stirre, and not cleanse the puddle, and that it is not amending of nature that he must attain to, but he must believe, and make a long arme to Heaven, and apprehend the Lord Jesus, (which so few know, or ever shall enjoy) and hereby quench the wrath of God; I say, finding he cannot do thus, no, nor no meanes of themselves can help him to this, hereupon he is forsaken of all his self wisdom,

dome, and of all his vaine hopes, and now sits down like a desolate widdow, comfortlesse, and sorrowfull, and thinks there is no way but death and hell, and the wrath of a displeased God to be expected. And if any come and tell this Soul of Gods mercy and pity to sinners, I saith he, its true, he is even infinitely mercifull unto them who are rent from their finnes, and that can believe, but that I cannot do; and am sure shall never be able for to do, and therefore what cause have I but to lie downe in my sorrow, and to expect my fatall stroke every moment? Reply againe upon this Soul, and tell him, that though hee cannot believe, or loosen his heart from sinne, yet that the Lord hath promised to do it, that he will subdue all his iniquity, and he will pardon all his sinne, and that he will cause men to walk in his waies, &c. True, saith the Soul againe, hee will doe thus for his owne people, and for them he hath chosen, but I never had dram of grace in my heart, and there is no evidence that the Lord is mine owne, or that I am his: Here againe the Soul lies downe, untill the Lord discovers to the Soul that he will doe these things for some that have no grace, or never had grace, for these promises were made to such.

Here upon the Soul thinks thus; These promises are made for some that are filthy, for why should God poure cleane water upon them, for some that be hard-hearted, for why should hee promise to take away the stony heart from them, &c. and if unto some such, and I being such a
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one, why may not the Lord possibly intend and include me, seeing hee hath not by his promise excluded nor shut me out? Indeed I dare not say he will, but yet how do I, or men, or Angels know, but yet I may be one? Hereupon Hope is raised to life againe; seeing God hath undertaken the worke for the vilest, it is possible he may doe it for me, now when I am vile and can doe nothing for my selfe. And thus you may see the first end and use of absolute promises, to be as it were, twiggges to uphold the sinking Spirits of hopelesse, helplesse, distressed Soules.

2. The Second End and Use of them is this. To create and draw out faith in Jesus Christ in the promises. For as the Law begets terror, so the promises beget Faith. Now no conditionall promise firstly begets Faith, because hee that is under any condition of the Gospel, in that man there is a presupposed faith. Its Gods absolute promise that firstly begets faith, for faith is not assurance, but the comming of the whole Soule to Christ in a promise, *John 6.35*. And then the Soule believes in Christ, when it comes to Christ, now this God workes in the Gospel. 1. The Soule is raised up by hope. And being raised, it Secondly comes to Christ, which is faith, by vehement unutterable desire. And being come to him, it 3. Embraceth Christ by love, and thus the match is made, and the everlasting knot is tied.

Now as you have heard, the absolute promise workes hope of reliefe from Christ: and
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if it workes hope, it also workes a desire, or comming to Christ by desire. Oh! that thou Lord wouldst honour thy grace, thy power, thy love, thy promise, in helping me a poore cast-away. And thus faith is created (as it were) by this absolute promise: for it cannot but move the heart of any one that ever felt his want, to cry mightily to the Lord for help, if he hath any hope, seeing the Lord hath promised to do it for some. Oh faith the Soule, that thou wouldst do it for me: And surely, were it not for this absolute promise of God, no Soule would desire, because he would have no hope to be saved, or to seeke for any thing as from the hands of God. And thus you see to what end God makes, and to what use a Christian may put these absolute promises.

2. For the second thing (*viz*) How and when a Christian may apply these promises.

I answer, every Christian is either,

1. Within Covenant with God, and knowes it, or

2. Within covenant with God, and knows it not, or

3. Out of covenant indeed, for his present estate and condition, yet he is *in fieri*, or making towards it.

1. If he be in Covenant and knowes it, then you may easily perceive how and when he ought to apply promises unto himselfe, for he may boldly conclude, If God be his God, then all the promises of God shall be made good unto him; if he be a Sonne of God, he may boldly

How to apply absolute promises.

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ly challenge at all times at the hands of God, (nay if in some respects, at the hands of Justice it selfe) the fulfilling of God the Fathers will delivered in the severall Legacies of the promise bought by the blood, and sealed by the same blood of Jesus Christ, that they may and shall be made good unto him that is cleare.

2. Secondly, If he be in covenant and knows it not, and questions hence whether God is his or not, and consequently, whether the promises belong unto him: then the rule is to be observed, let him so sue and seeke for the good of the absolute promise, untill by reflecting upon his own acts, herein he perceive himselfe adorned and dignified with the qualification of some conditionall promise, and then if he can finde the condition or qualification within himselfe, then as you judge and write, he may conclude, that the conditionall promise belongs to him, and if one promise, then all Gods promises, and therefore that absolute promises are his owne, because at least one conditionall promise is. For no unregenerate man is within the compasse of any one conditionall promise of grace, unlesse you will say he is under the everlasting love of God, the promises of grace being but the midway between the eternall purpose and decree of love, and the glorious certain execution of that love in time. The promise being the breake day of Gods most glorious love, which must shine out in time.

Object.

But here you will say is the difficulty, *viz.* how I should so seeke for the good of absolute pro-

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promises, as therein to finde my self within the compasse of some conditionall one.

I answer, It is done chiefly by three acts.

1. By being humbly contented, that seeing the Lord hath absolutely promised, to work and doe all for the Soule he intends for to save, even when it can doe nothing for it selfe, and that he hath taken the worke into his owne hands; so that it is his promise, offer, office and honour to doe all, that therefore you lie downe, not sluggishly, but humbly at the feet of God, and contented to have him to be your God, and for ever to be disposed of in any thing by God, if he will fulfill his covenant in you, contented to part with any sinne, if he will rend it from you, contented to know any truth if he will reveale it to you, contented to do any duty if he will enable you, contented to shine bright with all his glorious graces, if he will create and maintaine them in you, contented to beare any evill if he will lay his hand under your head, and thereunto strengthen you; and so seeing the Lord promised to undertake the work for some, put out the work, and put over your Soule to him, that he would fulfill the good that his covenant promiseth in your selfe. Now when you do thus, which (no question) you and many a Soul doth, many times reflect upon this act, and see if you cannot or may not finde your selfe by it under the condition of some conditionall promise, and if you do, then are you bound to believe all Gods promises are and will be *Yea* and *Amen* unto you. Now that you do so by

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this act, it selfe speaks plainly, for how many conditionall promises are made to the meek? *Blessed are the meek, Mat. 5.* and to the humble? whom God will raise up. For this is not saving meekenesse, to be quietly contented to be, or to do, or to bear any thing that the Lord will have me from mine owne strength and feeling, but to be, to do, or to bear any thing that the Lord will have me, if the Lord enable me. Many a stout heart would gladly have Christ, but if he cannot have him in his owne termes, *viz.* Christ and his lusts, Christ and the world too, or by his owne strength and power, he will have none of him, but desperately casts him away, and saith, what shall I looke after him any more? I cannot pray, I cannot believe, I cannot breake this vile and unruly will, this stony adamant heart, thus the pride of a mans heart workes. Now he that is truly meekned and humbled, he is contented gladly to have God his God, and Christ his Redeemer, and that upon Jesus Christ his owne termes. First, on his owne covenant; now what is that? why it is this, I will give you the good, and worke in you the condition too; I will give you my selfe, and therefore will not sticke to give you an eye to see, and a heart to receive too. This is the covenant; now hereupon a humbled Soul accepts of Christ according to his covenant, on his owne termes thus, *viz.* upon that condition Lord, that thou wilt humble me, teach me, perswade me, cause me to believe, and in every thing to honour thee; Lord, I am
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contented gladly and joyfully to have thee, doe therefore what thou wilt with me. Just as a sicke man tells his Physician, who comes not to him on these termes, If you will make your self halfe whole, then I will cure you, and doe the rest for you; but being utterly unable to cure, or to know how to cure himselfe, he tells his Physician, I am content you should begin and perfect the cure, and so honour your skill and love in me, to be contented to take any thing if you will give it me, and if I offer to resist that, you should bind me, and so do any thing with me.

2. The second act is, earnestly to long and come to Christ, to cleave unto Jesus Christ by fervent and ardent desire, that he would make good those absolute promises to you, seeing that they are made to some, and that they doe not exclude you; for when you ponder well, and see what wonderfull great things the Lord promiseth to some, whose heart cannot but be stirred up to say, as that woman in another case, *Lord, give me of that water to drinke?* and as they in the fifth of John, *Lord, evermore give us that bread.* Now doing this, reflect upon this Second act, and see if unto it, no conditionall promise belongs, and you shall find an affirmative answer from the word. For what is this longing after the good, not of some (which many hypocrites do) but of all the promises, but that which the Scripture calls thirsting, who are commanded to *come and drink of the waters of life freely*, Isa. 55. 1, 2. and hungering, to

which all good things are promised, *Mat. 5. 6.* and which comming to Christ (as I spake even now) who hath given this as the first fruit of eternall election, and which kind of people he will never cast away, *John 6. 37.* Now when you see these promises belonging unto you, why dare you not conclude but that all these absolute ones are yours also.

3. The third act is this, Seeing God hath promised absolutely such good things in the Second Covenant, but hath not set downe the time when, or how much grace he will give, and seeing onely he can helpe, therefore looke up, and waite upon the Lord in the use of all knowne meanes, untill he makes good what he hath promised to do, and performe, and worke for you. Say as beggars that have but one doore to go to for bread, if none heare, or hearing help not, lay themselves downe at the doore, and say, I will wait here, I am sure I perish if I goe away, or quarrell with them in the house, because they helpe me not so soon as I would, and therefore I will waite, for it may be their compassions may move them as they passe by to helpe me. So doe you, Many a Soul comes and longs for the good of the promises, but if the Lord doe not speedily help him, he goes with discouragements, fears, and discontentes, or despair, or sinne away, and saith one of these two things, either I shall never have helpe, or I come not truly, and hence I feel no helpe. Oh remember that bread is onely to be had at the doore, to be distributed when the

the Lord seeth need, not when we would, or thinke wee have need, and therefore wait here and say, if I perish, here I will, at the feet of God, and at the feet of the promises and covenant of God, &c.

Now reflect upon this act, and see if you may not finde some conditionall promise annexed unto it, which surely you may, and I will name you but two, *Isa.* 40. 29, 30, 31. and *Isa.* 64. 4. and if the conditionall promise belongs to such a Soul, you may easily conclude the absolute promises are your owne, and the chiefest use you are to make of them when you know them that they are your owne, is to presse God to make them good daily to you: and to believe as verily and really, as if you had the performance of them, that they shall. It may be you will aske me, how shall I know whether I have these conditions truly in me? I answer, sincerity is a very witnessing grace, the frequent meditation of the Scripture will give you much light, to judge of the sincerity of them, and that which Saint *Paul* speaks 1 Cor. 2. 12. I say unto you, *We have not received the spirit of the World, but of God, whereby we know, (or may know) the things that are freely given to us of God.*

3. Thirdly, If he be out of the covenant, but yet God begins to worke with some common worke of his grace upon him: all that I would say to him, and all the use he can make of such absolute promises, consists in these things.

1. Let him consider the freenesse of Gods

promise, whereby he may be stirred up to conceive some hope it may be made good to him in time. For the promise is very free and large, excluding none (except those that sin unpardonably) be their finnes and natures never so vile before God, and yet not including any by name, for that is in the conditionall promise; and hence such an one is to make this use of it, who knowes but the Lord may have pitty upon me in time; and so hang thy hope upon him.

2. Let him consider the worth and price of Gods promise bought by blood, and for which some men would give a thousand worlds for the benefit and comfort of; and hereby raise up his heart, as by the freeness of it to hope, so by the price of it to esteem of the thing promised, above pearls, and all the honour and pomp of the world.

3. Let him consider the fulnesse of the promise, which is a plaister as big as his sore, just answerable to all his wants, nay infinitely more large then his wants. And surely these three things will draw his heart to long for the promise, and then you know what is conditionally promised and bequeathed to them that thirst: For similitude is the ground of love. Now when the fulnesse of the promise is seen, there will appeare such a suteableness and fitnessse of the promise to his soule, that hee cannot but long for it. Thus much for the fifth trouble.

Quest.

Your sixth trouble set downe in two heads,
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put into one for brevity, *viz.* secret unwillingnesse to seeke God in the strictest solemn services, before you enter into them; wearinesse of them while they last, and glad when they are gone: the reasons which you mention are, partly feare of not using them aright, together with melancholy, and lastly, the strictnesse of them.

Answ.

It is very true, there is abundance of wildnesse in our hearts, which naturally seeke to have their liberty abroad, and cannot endure to be pent in the narrow room of holy performances, extraordinary duties, &c. no more then children can be pent up from their play. And hence it is weary of them, and glad to think of their departures and ends. And truly it is one of the most grievous miseries that a holy heart can feel, and I beseech the Lord of heaven and earth to keepe you, and me, and all his for ever, while wee are here in our valley, under the sense of such distempers as our greatest misery. And therefore me thought it was a solemn sweet speech of an honest man to his friend, who seeing him oppressed with such distempers as you mention, and perceiving him to droop under them, hee came chearefully to him, and suddenly said unto him, I can tell you good newes, the best that ever you heard, *viz.* As soon as ever you are in Heaven, you shall serve Christ without wearinesse: Which words well thought on, revived the man. That which I would speak with as much tendernesse of compassion as I am able to you, I refer to these things.

1. That a child of God is never usually weary of the duty, but rather of his vile heart, to thinke of, and to looke upon, that in the duty *Christs yoke is easie, and his burthen light*, to him that takes it on his necke, and puts his Soule under it. The duty nakedly considered in it selfe, is glorious in his eyes, and sweet to his Soule, and hence sometimes never well, but when he considers his dead, blinde, barren, and senselesse heart that he is to carry to the duty, and that he feares, and hath felt will abide with him in the duty : Oh ! this grieves, here the Soule pincheth. An Hypocrite is weary of the duty, a childe of God rejoyceth in it, but hee is weary of his sinne, and unfavourinelle and wearinesse in the duty. I perswade my selfe Sir that you may soone mistake your spirit herein : you thinke you are unwilling to come to the duty ; and are weary of it, when indeed, it is your glory, joy, and love ; but it is because you feare you can doe it no better, that troubles you, that you have such a vile heart in it. And if your trouble be from hence, the good Lord increase it in you daily ; and withall, blesse the Lord and say, Lord, though I am weary of my vile heart, in these daies of humiliation, in these Sabbaths, yet I blesse thee, the daies and duties themselves thou knowest are deare unto me, It is not Lord because I am weary of thy word, but because I can doe it no better, I am weary of my selfe, and this vile heart ; here is much love in such a spirit to the Lord. And believe it Sir, your love wants not its recompences

pences, and remember that the Lord respects you not according to your duties done, but according to your love in them, and to them. And therefore those duties you are ashamed to owne, the Lord will not be ashamed to crown.

2. Consider you must and shall be baited with these distempers of heart, sometimes more, and sometimes lesse, as long as you live. It is part of *Pauls* body of death which hee must carry with him, till he come to bury himselfe.

3. Those means which may helpe you to be freed from them (a little at least) are these among many.

1. Be but truly and really, not by fits and darkly, sensible of them, men in deep miseries, are not unwilling to be helped out.

2. Judge ye not rigorously of God, although he were a bloody austere God, as he did of his master whose talent he had, and hence never improved it; but looke upon God as having a Fathers heart and affection towards you in the meanest and greatest performances; which is double, either to give you strength to do what you cannot (*I can do all things through Christ*) or having come to him for it, to accept of what you would do for him, as if it were done; and this will make you joy in the poorest performance, that though it be never so full of vilenesse, yet the Lord out of his fatherly love, accepts of it as glorious.

3. Renew morning and evening by sad and solemn

solemne meditation, the sense of Gods love to you in Christ, and in every duty that he sets you about, and love will love and like the yoke, and make the commandements that they shall not be grievous to you.

Thus I have briefly done with your new troubles which you mention, you say, because you may not have the like opportunity of writing again. It may be so, and therefore I have desired to satisfie you, which I beseech the Lord himself to do.

Next you come to reply to my first Letter, of which I have kept no copy, as I never did of any, and hence may and doe forget what I writ then unto you. So much light as your Letter lends me to bring things to mind, I will gladly take, and be more briebe in answer.

Quest. 1.

You finde the strength of grace to be got in you rather by argumentation, then inward communication and influence arising from the union to Christ. And this troubles you.

Ans.

To which I answer these three things.

1. That as the old sinnefull nature is communicated from *Adam* the first to us, without any argumentation; so the new nature, which is the seed, foundation, and plot of all grace, is diffused into us by the second *Adam* when we are united to him, without argumentation. It is onely by divine operation. The Lord leave not me, nor any friend I have, to a naked Arminian illumination and perswasion.

2. That to the increase of those habits, and
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drawing out the acts of the new creature, the Lord is pleased to use morall and rationall perswasions; as in the instance you gave, Christ died for us, then hence the love of Christ con- strains: but remember withall, It is not the bare meditation, or strength of reason or perswasion, that elicits such divine and noble acts in the heart and affection, but it is the blood of Christ sprinkling these serious meditations, that makes them worke such graces in the Soule; which I might shew at large: which blood is the salve, though argumentation is the cloth or leather to which it sticks, and by which it is applied; but from such leather comes no vertue, all of it is from the blood of christ, which by argumentation heales the Soule. For if it were nakedly in the argumentation to stir your heart, and to worke strength of grace, what should be the reason that some times you are no more moved by all your argumentations, then a mountaine of brasse is by the windes? why should the same truth affect you at one time, and not at another, when you are as fitly disposed to be affected as at the first? Therefore consider it is not your reason and argumentation, but Christs blood that doth all, by as admirable, and yet secret operation.

3. Your union to Christ on your part is begun, and partly wrought by the understanding, and hence the good that you get by it at any time, it is from your union, or part of it at least.

Againe you aske me, whether Calvin doth not

Quest. 2.

not expresse fully my thoughts about our Spirituall union, in his *lib. 4. cap. 17.*

Ans.

I answer, I have forgot what he hath writ, and my selfe have read long since out of him, and for the present I have no bookes about me where I am, and therefore cannot satisfie you in this, neither know I when I shall seeke to finde out the booke and place; If I have leisure, I will either write to you, or tell some of your friends before I am gone, what he hath said or writ that way, &c.

Quest. 3.

Again thirdly, You desire me to tell you how my selfe came to the cure of Atheisticall thoughts, and whether they did weare out, or whether they were rationally overthrowne.

Ans.

I answer, at first they did wear out, meeting with fruitlesse and dead-hearted company, which was at the University.

2. The Lord awakened me againe, and bid me beware lest an old sore broke out again: and this I found that strength of reason would commonly convince my understanding that there was a God, but I felt it utterly insufficient to perswade my will of it unlesse it was by fits, when as I thought Gods Spirit moved upon the Chaos of those horrible thoughts; and this I thinke will be found a truth.

3. I did groane under the bondage of those unbelieving thoughts, looking up, and sighing to the Lord, that if he were as his workes and word declared him to be, he would be pleased to reveale himselfe by his owne beames, and perswade my heart by his owne Spirit of his

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Essence and being, which if he would do, I should account it the greatest mercy that ever he shewed me. And after grievous and heavy perplexities, when I was by them almost forced to make an end of my selfe and sinnefull life, and to be mine owne Executioner, the Lord came between the bridge and the water, and set me out of anguish of spirit, (as she prayed for a child) to pray unto him for light in the midst of so great darkenesse; In which time he revealed himselfe, manifested his love, stilled all those raging thoughts, gave returne in great measure of them; so that though I could not read the Scripture without blasphemous thoughts before, now I saw a glory, a majesty, a misery, a depth in it, which fully perswaded, and which light (I desire to speake it to the glory of his free grace, seeing you call me to it) is not wholly put out, but remains while I desire to walk closely with him, unto this day. And thus the Lord opened mine eyes, and cured me of this misery; and if any such base thoughts come (like beggars to my doore) to my minde, and put these scruples to me, I use to send them away with this answer, Why shall I question that Truth, which I have both knowne and seen.

But you say this remedy is good, *viz.* of prayer, but that you cannot use it, especially because you question the truth of God.

Object.

Yet (deare Sir) give not over this Trade, you will doubtlesse finde it gainesfull, when it may be God hath laden you more with these thoughts,

Ans.

thoughts, and made you loath your selfe for them. But the thing seemes strange to me, if I mistake you not, *viz.* that your heart will not be perswaded, but that you must resolve your doubts concerning the perfection of Scripture, not by seeking to harmonise those passages that seeme to crosse one another, but by ascribing some humanity or error, (if I may interpret you) to the pen-men, seeing St. *Paul* saith, *We prophesie but in part*, and seeing one of the Evangelists leaves out the doxology in the Lords prayer.

Sir, if you take these thoughts, arising from these and the like grounds, as your burden, I do not blame you, but pittie you in that respect; but if your judgement indeed thinke so, I am sorry you should harboure such thoughts one houre within doores: for you know that holy men writ the Scriptures (but so far they might erre, but it is added) as they were inspired, or (as the Originall hath it) as they were moved or carried in the armes of the holy Ghost, and so how could they erre? how could God lie? It is true, *Paul* did prophesie but in part, and is this an argument, because he did not prophesie fully, therefore in some things he did not prophesie truly; I am perswaded you will say there are many things my poore thoughts have suggested to you, as true; and yet I am perswaded I doe in them prophesie (if I may so say) but in part. The Spirit of God directed the foure Evangelists to write, yet so, as they did not all write what another writ, but in
great

great wisdom left some things doubtfull, and short in one, which are more cleare and full in another : and hence the Doxologie is fully set downe in one, and not in another, and many reasons I could set you downe why, but that it is needlesse : I grant you ought not to put up all with a charitable opinion of Scripture, but if you can, by reason, reading, and comparing, helpe your heart to a full perswasion, this is Scripture : but many things you cannot get satisfaction for, by that way and meanes, but still your Spirit will be left darke and doubtfull; What course will you here take for resolution, which is Scripture? The Papists say it is so, because the Church hath christned it for Scripture; you say you will see reason for it that it is so, or else you cannot be satisfied, then I feare you wil never be satisfied. (I thinke) In this case therefore these two things you are to do,

1. To go to God by prayer, to give you a resolution of all your doubts, and by some meanes or other, some light to see whether this is his word or not, Secondly, if this be his word, that he would perswade your heart of it, that it is so : For the least resolution which is Scripture, and which is not, is made by the same perswasion, and sole perswasion of the same Spirit that writ the Scripture. Concerning the Angels that appeared to *Mary*, see *Gerard*, and he briefly, (I thinke) will satisfie you : In your answer to the particular scruples about the Scripture sense, and the dissonancy of

of them. Onely this I will adde to the last clause about these things, that if the Scripture be inspired by the holy Ghost, and that not in the sum and substance of it, but to every word and sentence of it, which I thinke you will not doubt of, when you have considered it, then I thinke it will undeniably follow, that the same Spirit of truth is also a Spirit of order, and hence the method of various penning of it, is from the Spirit too, which you say you sticke at.

Answ. 2.

Againe to your third thing, concerning your spirit being burthened with involuntary infirmities, as burdens, but not as sinnes. I say nothing now, because I perceive by one part of your reply that the Lord hath done you some good by the first answer, onely it is your grieve you cannot feare them, nor condemn your selfe for them, as damning sinnes. For satisfaction of which, I hope this reply to your second trouble will give you some satisfaction.

Quest. 4.

Againe to your fourth question, to know whether these changes you have sometimes, and these movings of the Spirit, are not of naturall temper, or Gods Spirit. It seemes I did a little mistake the meaning, because you meant not the maine worke of grace, but occasionall stirrings and movings of heart, as by reading some patheticall Letter, your Spirit is moved with joy or sorrow, which it may be will not be stirred at some other time, as by drinking a cup of wine, the spirit is made more chearfull and lively, &c.

Answ.

I answer these three things.

1. First,

1. First, That it is very usuall for naturall affections to be raised by a naturall temper, as by drinking, eating, noveltinesse of the Gospel, *John's* candle flies were ravished with the Gospel : People are naturally moved sometimes by a thundering Minister, yet never a whit the more grace, &c. and it is a good speech of Doctor *Ames* : Arminian universall grace (as they describe it) may be the effect of a good dinner sometimes.

2. That though the being of grace depends not upon the temper of the body, yet the exercise of grace, and many gifts of grace, together with the feeling of it doth. And hence a good dinner, and sometimes wine to a sad melancholy (if gracious) heart may remove *rem prohibentem* that may keepe grace, as joy and thankfullnesse from working, and so take the grace and draw it out, not create and diffuse the grace : The Prophet called (you know) for a Minstril, which some thinke, (and that upon good grounds) was to raise up his heavy heart, and make him chearfull and fit to speake, the body is the instrument, which if it be broken, the best grace will hardly sound, but if whole, then they will.

3. If you would know when these things onely draw out grace, or make a thing like unto grace in the Soul, I answer, by these two things chiefly.

i. If it be true grace, it ever makes you more humble and vile in your owne eyes, and say, Lord, why dost thou give me any desire

to thee, any cheerfulness in serving thee?
&c.

2. It makes you more thankfull, and to
bless the Lord that he thus remembers you, for
this is a standing rule, what ever comes from
nature, and a mans selfe, it ever builds up it
selfe, and returns to selfe againe; what ever
grace comes from Christ, it drives a man out
of himselfe, by making him humble, and draws
him unto Christ that sent him, by making him
thankfull; I thinke all grace, and stirrings, and
movings, that have not this double effect in
some measure, are to be suspected, and if they
have, it is dangerous to doubt whether they are
true or no.

5. Again, Your fifth thing about providence,
you say you cannot see a positive providence,
although you do see a negative providence in all
your occasions, and comforts, and crosses, you
meet withall, as namely, you can thanke God
for not taking away your life, &c. but you can-
not see God giving it.

Ans. 1.

I answer, 1. Consider what I writ to you at
first about this question in generall.

2. Ponder sadly whether any creature or ap-
purtenance to it, hath its being from it selfe, or
from the will and word of God, viz. I will
have such a man to be, and such a memory to
be, &c. I thinke you will say nothing can
make it selfe, therefore here is a positive pro-
vidence in having life, liberty, &c.

3. Consider whether the same will and word
that gives it a being, together with all the ap-
purte-

purtenances to it, doth not also give it act and motion. That it is so, I thus demonstrate it.

1. Every creature is made for an end, for no wise efficient, but workes for some wise end.

2. That no creature can lead it selfe to its end, if sinnefull or irrationall.

3. God must and doth lead it by its severall acts and movings to that end. Hence 4. Every act is determined by God.

And although I grant some creatures move freely, some necessarily, yet it is from a positive will and providence that they move, act and see. Therefore you see what cause there is to see a positive providence in every thing.

Concerning the rest of your letter, Oh that I had time and heart to write more, yet I hope I have writ enough for this time, and the Lord knowes whether evermore or no. However I thanke you heartily for improving me this way of writing, who have my mouth stopt from speaking. I wish I had more such friends to deale thus with me, and my selfe more time, and a more fruitfull head and heart to improve my selfe, this, of any other like way for them: For who knowes what breathings of Gods Spirit are lost for want of writing, especially when there is no season of speaking. Truly Sir, I meet with few that are much troubled in that manner as your selfe, but they goe on in an easie, quiet, and very dangerous way: which troubles (I perswade my selfe) keep you awaking, when other virgins are slumbring, and after which (I am perswaded) the Lord in-

tends to use you for more then common service, if you wade well through them; however as I said before; be not discouraged, or too much perplexed in sorrow for them. For surely, as farre as I can guesse, the Lord is preparing you for himselfe by them. I shall not forget you, though I never saw you: and I beseech you if you have any sparke of affection toward me, kindled by these few lines, remember when you are best able to pray for your selfe, to remember to looke after me and mine, and all that go with me on the mighty waters, and then to looke up and sigh to Heaven for me, that the Lord would out of his free grace but bring me to that good land, and those glorious Ordinances, and that there I may but behold the face of the Lord in his Temple, though hee never delight to use me there, though I and mine should possibly beg there, and that if the Lord should call me to my solemne worke and service for the good of his Church and People, and company that goe with me, or are gone before me, that then the Lord Jesus would reveale his secrets to me, and enable me the little time I have to live, to be fruitful to him, and to have a larger heart then ever for him. As for your selfe, I shall desire the Lord to keep you blamelesse and unspotted in an evill world, and that as he hath begun, so he would perfect, and crowne his divine graces and worke in you, and that you may be preserved from nationall sins, which shortly bring National and most heavy plagues.

And

And the presence of the Lord may abide with you, and in you, untill the Lord call for you. Remember my kinde love to your Father, whose name I have forgot, and by whom I could not send these lines, being then hindered by businesse. Now the peace of Jesus Christ be with you and keepe you upright and blamelesse till death. And if I never see you more till the last and great day, then Farewell, Farewel.

Yours in Iesum Christ

T. S.